

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSERVATION OF
PANTHERA AND *PAN*. Z.N.(S.) 482

(see volume 22, pages 230-232)

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When I read Morrison-Scott's proposal for the conservation of the names *Pan* and *Panthera*, I sent a few words of support, as it seemed advisable to keep such names, now widely employed by both mammalogists and non-mammalogists.

Now, I am rather impressed by comments sent by P. Hershkovitz and by F. Dias de Avila-Prires (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 23 (2/3) : 67-69). It appears that we must first consider not a nomenclatorial problem, but a strictly taxonomic one: are large and small cats congeneric or not? are chimpanzee and gorilla congeneric or not?

It is often said that the taxonomy of mammals is now well established and that only the smaller forms require further work. It is therefore surprising that we don't know the proper scientific name of the lion, or the chimpanzee; as a matter of fact a museum curator or director is still uncertain (1966!) about the labelling of the specimens, and the present examples are not alone.

Therefore, I consider the opportunity of discussing a nomenclatorial question a doubtful one when the corresponding taxonomic question has not been solved.

May I add that, as far as large mammals are concerned, the solution of similar problems is particularly desirable. The present case involves such "well-known" animals that a final agreement on their taxonomy can reasonably be expected. Of course, this is a matter for the mammalogists and not for the Commission. The latter can consider later what generic names are to be used, if this remains uncertain.

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